

Coping Skills for Children of Drug Addicted and Mentally/Emotionally Challenged Parents

I. Introduction

- A. Presenter-Nadia Noel-Community Outreach Specialist
- B. Credit-.5 Hours
- C. <http://www.qpiflorida.org/justintime/pages/topicindex.html>

II. Objectives

- A. Recognize and examine ways to help foster children of addicted and mentally/emotionally challenged parents cope with their emotions, stresses, and problems.
- B. Examine side effects of having a parent that deals with addictions or mental/emotional challenges.
- C. Understand protective and risk factors in children and families
- D. Learn coping skills we can gain from an understanding of the protective factors.

III. Presentation

- A. Good parenting according to National Institute of Child Health and Human Development includes:
 - 1. Keeping your child safe
 - 2. Showing affection and listening to your child
 - 3. Providing order and consistency
 - 4. Setting and enforcing limits
 - 5. Spending time with your child
 - 6. Monitoring your child's friendships and activities
 - 7. Leading by example
- B. When parenting is done poorly:
 - 1. Neglect-failure to properly care for
 - 2. Abuse-defined as the regular patterns of behaviors in a relationship that are used to gain and/or maintain power and control over another person.
- C. Addiction
 - 1. Is a mental and behavioral health issue
 - 2. Is it the inability to live without a substance, item, activity
 - 3. It is signified by the compulsion to use
 - 4. It is both psychological and physical
 - 5. A symptom of addiction is withdrawal, which is experienced when the substance, item, or activity is not in use for an extended period of time
 - 6. It is a chronic disease, the brain is forever changed.

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- D. Other common Mental Health Issues/Emotional Issues
 - 1. Anxiety
 - 2. Trauma
 - 3. Mood Disorders
 - 4. Panic Attacks
 - 5. Psychotic Disorders
 - 6. Eating Disorders
 - 7. Inappropriate/ineffective ways of coping
 - 8. Continual hardships that affect emotional wellbeing
- E. What is the job of a child?
 - 1. Grow physically, psychologically, emotionally, and intellectually:
 - 2. Explore the world around them
 - 3. Learn
 - 4. Be loved and discover how to love
 - 5. Develop a personality
 - 6. Have a favorite food and be picky
- F. Some side effects of having a parent who struggles with addiction, emotions, or other mental illness
 - 1. Guessing at what is normal
 - 2. Difficulty having fun
 - 3. Judging themselves mercilessly
 - 4. Difficulty with emotional relationships
 - 5. Feeling different from other people
 - 6. Tendency to be impulsive
 - 7. Either super responsible or super irresponsible
 - 8. Desperately seeking approval or affirmation
 - 9. Suffering from chronic anxiety
 - 10. Lacking self-discipline
 - 11. Compulsive liars
 - 12. Suffering from a critical deficiency of self-respect
 - 13. Fear and mistrust of authority figures
- G. How can a child overcome their parent's struggles?
 - 1. Protective Factors are individual or environmental characteristics, conditions, or behaviors that reduce the effects of stressful life events; increase an individual's ability to avoid risks or hazards; and promote social and emotional competence to thrive in all aspects of life now and in the future,
 - 2. Coping skills are behavioral and psychological efforts to manage, minimize, or tolerate stressful events.
- H. Protective factors vs. Risk Factors
 - 1. Risk factors are individual or environmental characteristics, conditions, or behaviors that increase the likelihood that a negative outcome will occur.

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- I. Example of Protective Factors for children
 - 1. Good health
 - 2. History of adequate development
 - 3. Above average intelligence
 - 4. Hobbies and interests
 - 5. Good peer relationships
 - 6. Stable relationship with parents
 - 7. Adequate housing
 - 8. Parents have a model of competence and good coping skills
- J. Examples of Risk Factors for children
 - 1. Feelings of insecurity
 - 2. Lack of trust
 - 3. Insecure attachment with parents
 - 4. Social isolation, lack of support
 - 5. Dangerous/violent neighborhood
 - 6. Lack of access to medical care, health insurance, adequate child care, and social services
 - 7. Parental psychopathology
 - 8. Poor parent-child interaction, negative attitudes and attributions about child's behavior
- K. Protective factors that help children cope
 - 1. Personality factors:
 - a. Active coping style
 - b. Positive self-esteem
 - c. Good social skills
 - d. Internal focus of control
 - e. Balance between autonomy and ability to seek help
 - 2. Social/environmental protective factors
 - a. Access to health care and social services
 - b. Consistent parental employment
 - c. Adequate housing
 - d. Family religion and/or faith participation
 - e. Good schools
 - f. Supportive adults outside of family who serve as a role model/mentors to child
 - 3. Parental/family protective factors
 - a. Secure attachment
 - b. Positive and warm parent-child relationship
 - c. Supportive family environment
 - d. Household rules/structure
 - e. Parental monitoring of child
 - f. Extended family support and involvement, including caregiver help
 - g. Stable relationships with parents
 - h. Parents have a model of competence and good coping skills
 - i. Family expectations of pro-social behavior

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- L. How do you cope with emotions, problems, and stress?
- M. Coping skills gained from protective factors
 - 1. Seeking support-asking for help or finding emotional support from family members or friends
 - 2. Problem solving-aims to locate the source of the problem and determine solutions
 - 3. Adjusting expectations-anticipating alternative outcomes to situations
 - 4. Positive reframing-humor
 - 5. Relaxation/exercise-to manage stress
 - 6. Venting-in moderation can be healthy
- N. More coping skills for dealing with parents struggling with addiction...
 - 1. FAMES for Cs
 - a. You didn't cause the mental illness
 - b. You can't cure the mental illness
 - c. You can't control the mental illness
 - d. You can cope with the mental illness
 - 2. Start early by helping the child talk about his/her emotions
 - 3. Help the child discover their unique escalation type
 - 4. Once the child can identify pattern of escalation, work with them to make a plan for what to do when overwhelmed
 - 5. Should an explosion happen anyway, it is important to remain calm and create a distance between your emotions and the child's
 - 6. Take a breather
 - 7. Remember to focus on the good behavior you want to see
 - 8. Behavioral outbursts, whether internal or external, are teachable moments.